Learning Rocks

Training Newsletter

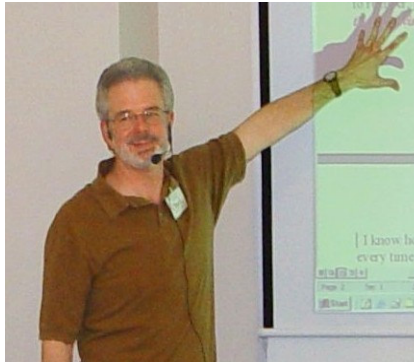www.roundrocklibrary.org   Volume 2, Issue 1   Spring 2006

Round Rock   Public Library

Meet Your Trainers - Chuck Aston, volunteer

I've met many wonderful people in the 3 years I've been teaching computer classes at the Round Rock Public Library. I've also discovered how much I enjoy teaching and working with adult learners at all levels of experience, including first-timers. I admire them for taking the plunge.

My wife and I moved to Round Rock 15 years ago, and our son went to the excellent Round Rock schools from the 1st through the 12th grades. We each came to the area from Dallas over 30 years ago to attend UT, where I first caught the computer bug.

I graduated in film but Spielberg didn't return my calls and I wound up working with computers in a variety of ways, ranging from technical support to network management, graphics to website design. While freelancing as a technical writer, I had the good fortune to be hired by a 5-person start-up company that made computers for oil exploration, where I got to work in all aspects of the company.

Besides tinkering with computers, I love to travel and learn more about nature, history and other cultures first hand. I also enjoy digital photography, *trying* to keep up with science and technology – and of course, movies.

Contents

Regular Classes and Workshops

All classes require registration. Call the reference desk at 215-218-7000 to register. See our monthly calendar of adult programs for class **dates and times**. Printed calendars are at the library and the online calendar is at www.roundrocklibrary.org Some classes are getting new names and may teach new information. See the list of classes – both old and new - below

- Internet Skills for Beginners
- More Internet Skills
- Searching the Internet, parts I and II
- First Steps—for absolute beginners
- Second Steps—more computer skills
- Microsoft Word
- *Coming Soon:* Microsoft Excel

- Library Databases and Research
- Genealogy Research

Especially for seniors:
- Using Internet and Web-based Email for Seniors
- Computer Security and Internet Safety for Seniors

INSIDE

Featured Classes: The Internet Series
by Shelley Harper, Reference Librarian

You have probably heard about the internet—news about it seems to be everywhere these days. Much of the internet buzz describes a magic and infallible but complicated tool. As our society becomes increasingly dependent on and awed by the internet, the more the pressure increases for each person to know how to use online resources. In short, you've most likely felt the need to become internet literate.

Round Rock Public Library works to meet folks' needs to become proficient "surfers" by offering a 4-class series on the internet. The classes meet on Thursday mornings, from 9:30 to 11:30, in the library's computer lab.

Basic Internet teaches beginners how to get online and start finding interesting information. Students in this first class will learn how to connect to the internet, some terminology, and some searching skills for brand new users.

Intermediate Internet continues to teach students introductory skills for making use of the internet. After this class, students can bookmark favorite Web sites, customize their Web browsers, open multiple windows, and use Web-based e-mail.

Advanced Internet, meeting in two class sessions, focuses on searching skills and the kinds of useful information to be found on the internet. **Part 1** teaches students to develop a strategy for their searches and to use effective keywords to get the search results they want. **Part 2** gives students a grand tour of internet tools and resources. The tour covers tools like databases, directories, and catalogs. Finally, students sample resources like government information, shopping sites, and financial tools. Come join us!

All Sessions: 9:30-11:30

Internet Skills for Beginners: 1st Thursday of every month
- Learn what the Internet and how to access it

More Internet Skills: 2nd Thursdays
- How to browse & mark favorite sites, how to cut & paste

Searching the Internet 1: 3rd Thursdays
- How to search effectively

Searching the Internet 2: 4th Thursdays
- Search tools, such as databases, catalogs, and Web sites

Computer Tips by Hau-Kan Law, volunteer

Tip for Beginners:
If you accidentally double-click on the words beneath an icon and change the name by mistake, you can use the ESC button to change it back to the original name as long as the cursor is still blinking. You may also use the ESC button (on the top left corner of the keyboard) to cancel an unwanted right-click menu or toolbar menu.

Tip for Intermediate Users:
Are you left-handed and wish you could switch your left/right click mouse buttons? Does it seem that your computer is never able to response to your slow double-clicks? You can actually customize your mouse by going to the Windows Control Panel and double clicking on "Mouse" to customize various aspects of the mouse.

Tip for Advanced Users:
When a window seems to "hang" (is not responding) but you can still move your mouse, you can run a program called the "Task Manager" to terminate the window. You can find the Task Manager by right clicking on the blue area of the Taskbar or by pressing the Ctrl + ATL + Delete buttons at the same time. When you see the Task Manager, select the "Applications" tab. Select the task that shows "Status - Not Responding" and then press "End Task".

Jane Salt teaching in the Computer Lab

- Welcome to the Computer Lab -

The Library Computer Lab is located on the first floor, next to Meeting Rooms A & B. There are 12 computers for students, all of which have high speed internet access, Windows XP, Microsoft Office, and access to a printer. A projector shows the class what the trainer is doing on his/her computer helping the students to follow the tutorials. All computer classes are held at the computer lab and include hands-on practice.

Getting to Know the Computer - *Tech Talk* by Erin Kerrigan, volunteer

*C*omputers can be useful, fun, and at times frustrating. So, we will briefly explore the parts of the computer in order to maximize usefulness and fun.

Remember that the computer is a tool (like a hammer or a food processor). It is a powerful tool that can assist with tasks as complex as sending the Mars Rover into space. Luckily, we do not have to be rocket scientists to benefit from computers. They can also help us with tasks as simple as writing a letter.

Let's start with the external parts of the computer - the peripherals. These are things that connect by cables to the computer case. Examples are the monitor, keyboard, mouse, and printer. The monitor is the screen that shows what we are working on. The keyboard inputs information by typing. The mouse and its on-screen pointer allow you to move around a document that is on the monitor and to chose items by clicking a mouse button. The

> **Luckily, we do not have to be rocket scientists to benefit from computers.**

printer makes hard copies of a document.

The best way to feel comfortable with these devices is to use them. Sit down and try typing a letter. There is no key on the keyboard that will "break" anything on your computer – try it, just push random keys. (My cat has tried this by walking on my keyboard to let me know it's dinnertime, and although I do not advise that, for the most part the computer does not mind). At first, the mouse may seem awkward; it is commonly said, "Drawing with a mouse is like drawing with a brick." Playing games is a great way to master the mouse. Windows comes with several games you can use to practice : Solitaire, Minesweeper, Pinball, and FreeCell.

Now we will discuss the internal parts of the computer. First, the processor (CPU) is the "brain" of the computer, and its main part is a circuit board that connects the CPU and all the peripherals. Other important parts are the two places where the computer remembers or stores information: in RAM (Random Access Memory) and on a hard disk inside the case. RAM holds memory *temporarily*. If a program is closed or the computer is shut down the contents of RAM are lost, whereas the hard disk holds memory more permanently. The contents on the hard disk can be deleted by the user, but will not be lost by closing a program or shutting down the computer.

To get rid of the computer jitters experiment with tasks, play games, and practice. Enjoy discovering all the useful and exciting things you can do on the computer.

And the Trainers Are ...

Chuck Aston, volunteer, teaches classes for seniors

Shelley Harper, librarian, teaches the two Advanced Internet classes

Erin Kerrigan, volunteer, will teach the new MS Excel class and currently assists other teachers

Hau-Kan (Diane) Law, volunteer, assists other teachers

Mukesh Patel, volunteer, teaches MS Word as well as Basic and Intermediate Internet

Jane Salt, volunteer, teaches Computer Basics and will soon teach the Library Research & Databases class

Linda Sappenfield, librarian, teaches RRPL Genealogy courses

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The links are for students to practice their internet skills and for entertainment only. The sites and contents are not endorsed or supported by the Library.

*I*f you want a real human being to help you navigate through the complex world of computers, then you will like the Computing and Technology Web page. The page's parent Web site is about.com, a well-reviewed portal to subject-specific pages created and maintained by people passionate about their topics. Take a minute to look around the topics list on the home page at http://about.com/ .

Web Links
Computing and Technology at about.com
http://about.com/compute/

The Computing and Technology page lists the site's human-guided pages under this broad topic. Two of these pages that you might want to explore are: Computer Peripherals and Internet for Beginners. Look for links to both pages on the menu on the left of the Computing and Technology page. Both have helpful articles written by the guide and menus of links to related the pages' topics.

Be cautious about poorly identified sponsored links, but otherwise enjoy these jam-packed Web pages.

Featured Student—Councilman Rufus Honeycutt

*R*ufus Honeycutt is a member of the Round Rock City Council and is active in many community organizations. He was recognized as Round Rock's Citizen of the Year in 2001.

Councilman Honeycutt worked at IBM for 30 years managing the development of computer products. As you might expect, he has a great deal of experience with personal computers. Recently, though, Mr. Honeycutt decided to try out the Round Rock Public Library's inaugural course in Microsoft Word, which is being taught by Mukesh Patel, a former colleague

He felt that the [Word] course was a useful refresher for him, in addition to being a good resource for people new to the program.

and an IBM veteran.

Although Mr. Honeycutt uses Microsoft Word for many daily tasks, he felt that the course was a useful refresher for him, in addition to being a good resource for people new to the program. He commented that doing the practice exercises outside of class was particularly helpful. Mr. Honeycutt re-

ported that he even picked up some new things, which is not surprising since Microsoft Word is jam-packed with features and regularly gains new ones. He also noted Word's flexibility, which makes it useful in tasks ranging from writing letters and reports to creating brochures, web pages, and resizing and printing pictures.

About the Newsletter

*T*his Newsletter will be published quarterly, and we hope it provides you with useful information about our classes.

Each issue introduces a trainer and a student and highlights one of the classes. You will find computer tips, featured web links, and an article about an aspect of current technology. Also look for lists of classes and trainers and other fun and useful items to read.

If you have any thoughts or comments on the Newsletter or our classes, you are welcome to contact the Library at the e-mail address or the phone number listed

To receive an electronic copy

lib_reference@round-rock.tx.us

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